Most Excellent Sir

Your Note of the 8th inst. in relation to the Brig Ontario, I have had the honour to receive.

I now transmit to Your Excellency, a copy of a protest, made at this Consulate by Hugh McKenzie, Master of that Vessel, the facts therein declared, and which I presume the Honourable Deputies, who came passengers in said Vessel, will not deny, must acquit the Captain of any improper motive, in shortening sail at the period alluded to in your Note, a circumstance to which much importance appears to be attached

With regard to the Honour of the American Flag not having been sustained by Captain McKenzie, I will remark that it is not to be expected that an armed Merchantman is to give battle to a formidable Privateer, and that if he had been capable of defending his Vessel, he would not have been justifiable in so doing.

The United States have not Authorised Masters of their Merchant Vessels, to say when the Honour of their Flag is assailed and at their pleasure to commence hostilities, upon Nations with whom they are at peace; the Government takes

upon itself to judge of such matters, and if necessary, to resent them.

However pleasing it might be to the United States, that their Flag should protect all under it, I am not prepared to say how far they may be disposed to enforce such a principle; but should such be their determination, and they should demand retribution of Buenos Ayres, for the late affair, which Your Excellency thinks so derogatory to Her Flag, they will have a precedent account of the same nature to adjust with Brazil. If the sanctity of their Flag has been violated, it is for them to complain, and not for Brazil to find fault with the operation of a principle which heroic tribunals have pronounced as orthodox, and already put into execution, in the case of the American Brig Leonidas.

If Captain McKenzie was guilty of any offence, which rendered him amenable to the Law, he should have been arrested immediately on his arrival at this port, for Your Excellency will discover from the protest of James Brickhead Esq (a copy of which I hereweth transmit) that other Citizens of the United States, being entirely unacquainted with the proceedings against Captain McKenzie

have involved their interests, by shipping property on board his Vessel, expecting her to sail on a given day, now passed.

Will your Excellency do me the favour to suggest the period, at which the investigations in relation to her will probably terminate. You are no doubt aware that the detention of a Vessel, without justifiable grounds, (which vague suspicions cannot be considered) is a hostile aggression upon the rights of the Nation whose Flag she bears, and every unnecessary delay in deciding such cases, aggravates the original injury.

I transmit herewith, a Copy of a protest made by Captain McKenzie against this Government, for the detention of his Vessel; and shall be happy to receive at as early a period, as may be convenient to your Excellency, a more definite statement of the charges against her, for it appearing to me a novel case, I wish to make my Government perfectly acquainted with all its circumstances.

Your Excellency will please accept the assurance of my distinguished consideration

To His Excellency
The Marquis of Queley
Counsellor, Minister,
& Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs

W. S. Wright
Consul
U. S. A.
Rio de Janeiro May 10th 18